THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

1. A method for selectively allowing a user of a multi-user system access to a plurality of resources in a network, the method comprising:

receiving a request originated from the user to transmit a message over the network to one of the plurality of resources;

identifying, from a plurality of security zones, a security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources;

determining if the user is authorized access to the identified security zone; and

forwarding the message over the network to the one of the plurality of resources only if it is determined that the user is authorized access to the identified security zone.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of associating a security zone with each of the plurality of resources.

3. The method of Claim 2, further comprising the step of specifying the security zones to which users of the multi-user system are authorized access.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of identifying the security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources comprises accessing a data structure that specifies the security zone associated with each resource in the plurality of resources.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein at least one entry in the data structure specifies the security zone

associated with a group of the resources in the plurality of resources, and wherein identifying the security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources comprises identifying the security zone associated with the most specific entry in the data structure that includes the resource.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the identifying and determining steps are performed within the multi-user system.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of determining if the user is authorized access to the identified security zone comprises querying a security manager of the multi-user system to determine if the user is authorized access to the security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the request to transmit a message is denied if it is determined that the user is not authorized access to the security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources before any data packets associated with the message are forwarded over the network.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the network is an internet protocol network.

10. A method for determining whether to allow an operation associated with a user identification corresponding to a user of a multi-user system that involves access to a resource in a network, the method comprising:

classifying the resource as being associated with a security zone from a plurality of security zones;

specifying the security zones from the plurality of security zones to which the user identification may have access; and

allowing the operation only if the user identification is specified as having access to the security zone associated with the resource.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein allowing the operation only if the user identification is specified as having access to the security zone associated with the resource comprises:

identifying the security zone associated with the resource;

determining if the user identification is specified as having access to the identified security zone; and

allowing the operation only if the user identification is specified as having access to the security zone associated with the resource.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the identifying step comprises the steps of:

receiving a request originated from the user identification to transmit a message over the network to the resource; and

accessing a data structure to identify the security zone associated with the resource.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the data structure specifies the security zone that applies to at least one group of resources.

14. A system for selectively allowing a user of a multi-user system access to a plurality of resources in a network, comprising:

means for receiving a request originated from the user to transmit a message over the network to one of the plurality of resources;

means for identifying, from a plurality of security zones, a security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources;

means for determining if the user is authorized access to the identified security zone; and

means for forwarding the message over the network to the one of the plurality of resources only if it is determined that the user is authorized access to the identified security zone.

15. The system of Claim 14, further comprising means for associating a security zone with each of the plurality of resources.

16. The system of Claim 15, further comprising means for specifying the security zones to which users of the multi-user system are authorized access.

17. The system of Claim 14, wherein the means for identifying the security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources comprises means for accessing a data structure that specifies the security zone associated with each resource in the plurality of resources.

18. The system of Claim 17, wherein at least one entry in the data structure specifies the security zone associated with a group of the resources in the plurality of resources, and wherein the means for identifying the security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources comprises means for identifying the security zone associated with the most

specific entry in the data structure that includes the resource.

19. A computer program product for selectively allowing a user of a multi-user system access to a plurality of resources in a network, comprising:

a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code embodied in said medium, said computer-readable program code comprising:

computer program product means for receiving a request originated from the user to transmit a message over the network to one of the plurality of resources;

computer program product means for identifying, from a plurality of security zones, a security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources;

computer program product means for determining if the user is authorized access to the identified security zone; and

computer program product means for forwarding the message over the network to the one of the plurality of resources only if it is determined that the user is authorized access to the identified security zone.

20. The computer program product of Claim 19, further comprising computer program product means for associating a security zone with each of the plurality of resources.

21. The computer program product of Claim 20, further comprising computer program product means for specifying the security zones to which users of the multi-user system are authorized access.

22. The computer program product of Claim 19, wherein the computer program product means for

identifying the security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources comprise computer program product means for accessing a data structure that specifies the security zone associated with each resource in the plurality of resources.

23. The computer program product of Claim 22, wherein at least one entry in the data structure specifies the security zone associated with a group of the resources in the plurality of resources, and wherein the computer program product means for identifying the security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources comprises computer program product means for identifying the security zone associated with the most specific entry in the data structure that includes the resource.

24. A method for selectively allowing a user of a multi-user system access to a plurality of resources in a network, the method comprising:

receiving a message over the network from one of the plurality of resources that is addressed to a process running on the multi-user system that is associated with the user;

identifying, from a plurality of security zones, a security zone associated with the one of the plurality of resources;

determining if the user is authorized access to the identified security zone; and

forwarding the message to the process only if it is determined that the user is authorized access to the identified security zone.